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Viewing cable 08ISLAMABAD2303, PRIME MINISTER GILANI AND CODEL CARDIN DISCUSS BILATERAL

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08ISLAMABAD2303	2008-07-07 07:04	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Islamabad

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.ndtv.com/article/wikileaks-revelations/wikileaks-us-raised-concerns-about-safety-of-pakistans-nuclear-assets-108219>

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 002303

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/30/2018

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SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER GILANI AND CODEL CARDIN DISCUSS BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

Classified By: DCM Peter W. Bodde, for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶11. (C) SUMMARY. In a June 30 meeting with Cardin, Pakistan Prime Minister Yousaf Gilani requested increased cooperation with the U.S. on security and economic assistance. He also firmly asserted that Pakistan's nuclear assets are protected and expressed hope for greater international focus on Afghanistan and the Pakistani border regions. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (C) A Congressional delegation composed of Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), and Representatives Robert Aderholt (R-AL), Mike McIntyre (D-NC), Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), and Zach Wamp (R-TN) as well as the Deputy Chief of Mission met June 30 with Prime Minister Gilani. Topics covered included: importance of the bilateral relationship, security in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and Afghanistan. The Pakistani government is working on a three prong approach in the fight against terrorism, according to Gilani. The first prong involves the political process and engaging the tribesmen who renounced violence and can be brought into mainstream politics. The second prong focuses on development: Gilani claimed the primary cause of the problems in the border areas is the lack of jobs, health care, education and communication with the outside world. The third prong will involve the use of military force if necessary.

Increased Cooperation

¶13. (C) Gilani expressed appreciation for the "bilateral support" from the United States. He noted the perception in the U.S that the GOP has engaged in agreements with the militants, but was quick to elaborate that the new coalition government has not concluded any peace agreements. Instead, they are concluded by provincial governments. He requested increased cooperation with the U.S. on defense, education, health and in establishment of the Reconstruction Opportunity Zones (ROZs). Gilani also sought increased cooperation on intelligence efforts and noted that the perception in Pakistan was that "we are fighting a war for America and we need to explain this is a war for humanity." Further stating that "the focus of the world needs to be on this part of the world," Gilani commented that the foreign fighters in Pakistan are "doing mischief in Afghanistan and here." Noting that the foreign fighters find a haven in Pakistan because of the poverty and lack of education, Gilani requested assistance in finding a "permanent solution."

Afghanistan

¶14. (C) Gilani noted that three million Afghan refugees are living in Pakistan. Stability must be established in Afghanistan so these refugees can go home. Noting that Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had recently traveled to Paris for the Afghan donor conference, Gilani expressed hope that the jirga process could help establish cross border stability. He also commented that Pakistan hopes to build a fence and implement a biometric system to track border movements, but needs a mutually agreed strategy with Afghanistan to do so. Responding to Senator Cardin's question on whether Pakistan had the measures necessary to deal with border security issues, Gilani noted that the refugees should go back to Afghanistan; however, without economic development to address the "root causes" of instability, this will not be possible.

¶15. (C) Responding to Rep. Sanchez's question about what the U.S. needs to do to get Afghanistan "back on track," Gilani replied that U.S. should simply "stay the course." Further stating that there is a perception that the U.S. will leave prematurely and that it was imperative to "see what you have started through to conclusion." Senator Cardin noted that he feels strongly that "we need to deal with the problems in Afghanistan and must work together to build on the progress already made."

Economy and Security

¶6. (C) Cardin noted that economic stability in Pakistan is critical for the regional stability, adding that eventually the U.S. would like to see the money spent on terrorism shifted to economic growth and helping the Pakistani people. Rep. Wamp noted that the "U.S. can't work out your political and judicial issues but we can help

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with the economy and security because [Pakistan] is the lynchpin for the whole region." Further stating that this is "a critical moment in the history of the world, specifically relating to Pakistan," Wamp noted his friendship with Benazir Bhutto and invited Gilani to regularly participate in the National Prayer Breakfast as she had done each year. Responding to Rep. Aderholt's question regarding the coalition's priorities, Gilani noted that Pakistan's priority now is first to fight against terrorism and second to build the economy. He further elaborated that whenever there is a bombing in the country, Pakistan loses foreign investors. U.S. assistance is needed "for a strategic fight to save the economy."

Nuclear Security

¶7. (C) Gilani responded emphatically to Rep. McIntrye's question about nuclear security and stated that he wanted to "dispel any image of perceived problems." He further elaborated, "We have control of the resources. These are not controlled by any one person and the political party process does not have any impact on nuclear security."

¶8. (U) Codel Cardin did not clear on this message.
PATTERSON

=====CABLE ENDS=====